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# HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: IMPLEMENTATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS

## United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

## Report of the Secretary-General

1. The United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981 for the purpose of receiving voluntary contributions for distribution, through established channels of humanitarian assistance, to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of torture and to their relatives.

2. The Voluntary Fund is administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the United Nations by the Secretary-General, with the advice of a Board of Trustees, composed of a chairman and four members with wide experience in the field of human rights, acting in their personal capacity and appointed by the Secretary-General with due regard to equitable geographical distribution and in consultation with their Governments.

3. The membership of the Board of Trustees is as follows: Mr. Jaap Walkate, Chairman (the Netherlands), Ms. Elizabeth Odio Benito (Costa Rica), Mr. Ribot Hatano (Japan), Mr. Ivan Tosevski (Yugoslavia) and Mr. Amos Wako (Kenya).

4. In its resolution 36/151, the General Assembly authorized the Board of Trustees of the Fund to promote and solicit contributions and pledges. It also appealed to all Governments to respond favourably to requests for regular contributions to the Fund. On 26 October 1992, a letter was sent by the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights and the Chairman of the Board to Ministries of Foreign Affairs of States that are regular donors to the Fund, asking them to take into consideration the urgent need for additional funding

and whether they could increase their contributions to the Fund. Another letter was sent to States that did not contribute regularly to the Fund, asking them to become regular donors.

5. The Secretary-General has reported annually to the Assembly and to the Commission on Human Rights on the administration of the Fund since 1982.

6. In its resolution 46/110 of 17 December 1991, the General Assembly, alarmed at the widespread occurrence of torture and convinced that the struggle to eliminate torture included the provision of assistance to the victims and members of their families, expressed its gratitude and appreciation to the Governments, organizations and individuals that had contributed to the Fund and to the Governments that had pledged a contribution at the 1991 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities; called upon all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to respond favourably to requests for initial as well as further contributions to the Fund; invited Governments to make contributions, preferably on a regular basis, in order to enable the Fund to provide continuous support to projects that depended on recurrent grants; requested the Secretary-General to include the Fund on an annual basis among the programmes for which funds are pledged at the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities; expressed its appreciation to the Board of Trustees of the Fund for the work it had carried out and to the Secretary-General for the support given to the Board in carrying out its decisions on an increasing number of projects; and requested the Secretary-General to make use of all existing possibilities, including the preparation, production and dissemination of information materials, to assist the Board of Trustees of the Fund in its efforts to make the Fund and its humanitarian work better known and in its appeal for contributions.

7. Since the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session (A/46/618 and Corr.1), the following contributions to the Voluntary Fund were received from Governments during the period from 1 December 1991 to 10 November 1992:

| Government | Contribution (United States dollars) | |
|---|---|---|
| Argentina | 4 000 for 1990 | 3rd contribution |
| " | 2 996 for 1991 | 4th " |
| Austria | 10 000 for 1992 | 8th " |
| Canada | 24 940 for 1992 | 10th " |
| Denmark | 168 662 for 1992 | 10th " |
| Finland | 180 230 for 1992 | 11th " |
| France | 55 556 for 1991 | 11th " |
| " | 56 604 for 1992 | 12th " |
| Germany | 126 103 for 1991 | 9th " |
| Iceland | 4 267 for 1991 | 6th " |
| " | 5 350 for 1992 | 7th " |
| Ireland | 5 815 for 1991 | 8th " |

| Government | Contribution | |
|---|---|---|
| | (United States dollars) | |
| Japan | 50 000 for 1991 | 6th " |
| Liechtenstein | 7 901 for 1991 a/ | 4th " |
| Luxembourg | 2 959 for 1991 | 8th " |
| Netherlands | 55 555 for 1991 | 10th " |
| New Zealand | 27 494 for 1992 | 8th " |
| Spain | 67 188 for 1992 b/ | 7th " |
| Sweden | 169 097 for 1990 | 5th " |
| " | 173 631 for 1991 | 6th " |
| Switzerland | 25 926 for 1991 | 5th " |
| Tunisia | 1 299 for 1992 | 2nd " |
| United States | 90 000 for 1988 | 4th " |
| of America | 98 000 for 1989 | 5th " |
| " | 100 000 for 1990 | 6th " |
| " | 100 000 for 1991 | 7th " |

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a/ This grant was attributed, by error, to Switzerland in document A/46/618 and Corr.1 of 8 November 1991.

b/ Doubling of contribution over previous year.

8. In addition, during the same period, the following pledges to the Voluntary Fund were made by Governments:

| Government | Pledge | |
|---|---|---|
| | (United States dollars) | |
| Germany | 119 048 for 1992 | Nine prior contributions |
| " | 129 870 for 1993 | " |
| Italy | 30 000 for 1992 | Three prior contributions |
| " | 30 000 for 1993 | " |
| Japan | 100 000 for 1992 a/ | Six prior contributions |
| Liechtenstein | 6 803 for 1992 | Four prior contributions |
| " | 7 300 for 1993 | " |
| Luxembourg | FLux 100 000 for 1992 | Eight prior contributions |
| Netherlands | NFL 100 000 for 1992 | Ten prior contributions |
| " | NFL 200 000 for 1993 a/ | " |
| Sweden | SEK 2 000 000 for 1992 a/ | Six prior contributions |
| " | SEK 3 000 000 for 1993 | |
| Tunisia | 1 949 for 1993 | Two prior contributions |

| Government | Pledge | |
|---|---|---|
| | (United States dollars) | |
| United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | 46 992 for 1992 | Four prior contributions |
| United States of America | 50 000 for 1992 | Seven prior contributions |
| " | 49 000 for 1992 | " |
| " | 500 000 for 1993 b/ | " |

a/ Doubling of contribution over previous year.

b/ Fivefold increase over previous year.

9. The following former pledges to the Voluntary Fund are still pending:

| Government | Pledge | |
|---|---|---|
| | (United States dollars) | |
| Chile | 2 000 (1 November 1990) for 1991 | First pledge |
| Greece | 5 000 (3 December 1990) for 1991 | Eight prior contributions |

10. During that period, a contribution of US$ 100 was made by Professor Cherif Bassiouni, President of the International Association of Penal Law (Chicago, Illinois, United States of America) in the name of the Association. A contribution of US$ 125 was received from Marymount Manhattan College (New York, United States) in lieu of a honorarium for Mrs. Elissavet Stamatopoulou-Robbins' lecture given at that College.

11. Contributions have also been received from Ms. Claudette Bass and Mr. Paul B. Sobin (Alhambra, California, United States, US$ 135), Mr. Melton Brumfield (New York, United States, US$ 10), Ms. Olivier Girardot (Lescarene, France, FF. 1.400), Ms. Rita Maran (Berkeley, California, United States, US$ 25) and Mr. Jaap A. Walkate and Ms. Marianne H. Walkate (Ottawa, Canada, C$ 125).

12. At its forty-eighth session, by its resolution 1992/27, the Commission on Human Rights, convinced that the struggle to eliminate torture included the provision of assistance in a humanitarian spirit to victims of torture and their families, took note of the information provided by the Secretary-General on the activities of the Fund (E/CN.4/1992/16 and Add.1) including a statement

made by the Chairman of the Fund's Board of Trustees (see appendix III), expressed its appreciation to the Board of Trustees for the work it has carried out and requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission at its forty-ninth session a consolidated report on the activities carried out through the Fund, entitled "Ten Years of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture", and to continue to keep the Commission informed of the operations of the Fund on an annual basis.

ANNEX

Information on the activities of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, provided by the Chairman of the Board

1. The developments taking place in the world over the past few years have led to an ever increasing number of refugees and of victims of torture. The centres for treatment of such victims have been confronted over the past year with much larger numbers of persons seeking medical help and economic, social and financial assistance. Therefore, the Board of Trustees has been seized with several requests for higher amounts of money. At its eleventh session, held at Geneva from 22 April to 1 May 1992, the Board dealt with requests for assistance totalling more than US$ 3 million and faced the painful necessity of having to limit its recommendations for grants by the Secretary-General to less than half of the amounts requested.

2. In the light of these circumstances the Board decided to launch a fund-raising campaign in which its Chairman, together with the Under-Secretary-General for Human Rights, Mr. Antoine Blanca, who takes an active interest in the well-being of the Fund, will engage in activities to solicit more and wider support from Member States and other contributors. In a first joint action they have addressed a letter to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of all Member States asking them to contribute or to contribute more to the Fund. A target amount of US$ 100,000 has been suggested for industrialized countries and an amount of US$ 10,000 for developing countries, preferably on an annual basis. In order to draw the personal attention of delegates to the financial situation of the Fund, the Chairman visited United Nations Headquarters in New York last October for consultations with interested delegations to the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. He also addressed a group of representatives of international non-governmental organizations. A fact-sheet in support of these fund-raising activities was distributed.

3. During its eleventh session, the Board of Trustees of the Fund examined information prepared by the secretariat concerning 121 projects, including analyses of narrative reports, financial reports and audits on the use of grants made in previous years, as well as requests for continuing assistance and new projects. The Board also heard 13 representatives of organizations implementing 36 of these projects.

4. The Board of Trustees recommended that 71 new grants be made from the Fund. Forty-six of these grants, corresponding to 54 projects and sub-projects representing an amount of US$ 1,304,800, deal with continuing support for projects approved in the past, and 16, representing an amount of US$ 198,000, deal with 15 new projects and sub-projects; US$ 110,000 were also recommended for 2 special projects. The total amount of the grants recommended is US$ 1,600,300 for 1992.

5. During the eleventh session, the Board also recommended that the file be closed on 16 projects and sub-projects. These recommendations contain conditions that the Board deems necessary to attach to the release of grants, such as the receipt of satisfactory narrative, accounting or audit reports.

6. The projects recommended are carried out in some 40 countries and benefit victims of torture from many other countries. As in the past, the focus of the Board's latest recommendations is on supporting programmes providing direct medical, psychological, social or other assistance to torture victims and their family members. The Board has also made recommendations for support to training programmes for health professionals of several countries on the techniques of treatment of victims of torture as well as for meetings of health professionals, in which they could exchange their experience. At its eleventh session, the Board also reviewed and discussed a small number of other projects on which it made no recommendation for support because they were outside the Fund's mandate or further particulars were needed.

7. The Board recommended at its tenth session and again at its eleventh session that the World Conference on Human Rights, scheduled to be held in 1993, should set aside some time to meet as a pledging conference for the Fund. The Board was pleased to take note of document A/CONF.157/P6/Add.9 conveying that suggestion and submitted by the Secretary-General to the Preparatory Committee.

8. At its eleventh session, the Board had, as usual, a meeting with the Chairman and the members of the Committee against Torture and recommended that a similar meeting be organized during its twelfth session as well as with the Special Rapporteur on Torture and, therefore, that part of its session should be scheduled to coincide with part of the session of the Committee against Torture.

9. The Board worked again under excellent circumstances, created by the expertise and devotion of the staff. It expressed the hope that this would again be the case in 1993 and that the problems that the staff encountered in view of the ever increasing number of projects would be solved. The Board expressed its continuous concern about the status and the small number of staff members of the secretariat of the Fund.

10. The Board of Trustees continued its practice to develop and elaborate a set of guidelines by which to judge new applications and financial and factual reports. This set of procedures and guidelines as it stands is attached as appendix II.

11. The Board of Trustees wishes to draw the attention of all those involved in the treatment of and assistance to victims of torture and their relatives that requests for financial support from the Fund must be submitted to the secretariat in Geneva before 31 December of each year in order for them to be considered by the Board at its session taking place in April of the following year.

APPENDIX I

United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

Established: Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981 for the purpose of receiving voluntary contributions for distribution, through established channels of humanitarian assistance, to individuals whose human rights have been severely violated as a result of torture and to their relatives.

Administered: In accordance with the Financial Regulations of the United Nations by the Secretary-General, with the advice of a Board of Trustees composed of five members with wide experience in the field of human rights, acting in their personal capacity and appointed by the Secretary-General. The membership of the Board of Trustees is as follows: Mr. Jaap Walkate, Chairman (the Netherlands), Ms. Elizabeth Odio Benito (Costa Rica), Mr. Ribot Hatano (Japan), Mr. Ivan Tosevski (Yugoslavia) and Mr. Amos Wako (Kenya).

Donors: Since its establishment, the Fund has received contributions from the following States: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Holy See, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Senegal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, Togo, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America. It has also received donations from several individuals and non-governmental organizations.

Projects: More and more torture victims are asking for professional help. In 1991/1992 the Fund supported some 100 projects all over the world to assist them in coping with the consequences of torture and cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment or punishment. Thousands of others are still in need of medical, psychological, social or financial help.

Financial situation: With requests for assistance totalling more than US$ 3 million, the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture, at its April 1992 session, faced the painful necessity of having to limit its recommendations for grants by the Secretary-General to less than half of the amounts requested in approximately 60 applications by Centres for treatment of and assistance to victims of torture and members of their families.

Needed: A minimum of US$ 100,000 per industrialized country and US$ 10,000 per developing country. There is an urgent need for regular annual contributions as victims of torture may have to be treated for long periods of time and in order to prevent interrupting the activities which the Fund has helped to start up. Also contributions by individuals are greatly appreciated.

Contributions: Can be made at any time by cheque or transfer to:

"United Nations Trust Fund Investment Pool", specifying "for the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture" to one of the foillowing accounts of the Fund:

- Chemical Bank, UN Headquarters, New York, N.Y. 10017, USA, Account No. 015-004473 in United States dollars, or

- Société de Banque Suisse (SBS)
  Case postale 2770, CH 1211 Genève 2
  Accounts:
  CO.590.160.1 in United States dollars or
  CO.590.160.0 in Swiss francs

Information: Will be given by the secretariat of the Fund, United Nations, Centre for Human Rights, CH-1211 Geneva 10, tel (41) (22) 917 33 94 or 917 33 95, fax (41) (22) 917 01 23, or by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Jaap Walkate, c/o Royal Netherlands Embassy, 275 Slater Street, 3rd floor, Ottawa, Ont., K1P 5H9, Canada, tel (1 613) 237 50 30, fax (1 613) 237 64 71.

## APPENDIX II

## Provisional set of procedures and guidelines adopted by the Board of Trustees

### Introduction

1. With an increasing number of contributions and requests for assistance, the highest standards should be applied to procedures followed by the Board and the secretariat. At its ninth session, in 1990, the Board, therefore, decided to start reviewing its own procedures and the guidelines for applicants for grants. The following guidelines and procedures were recommended by the Board of Trustees of the Fund at its ninth, tenth and eleventh sessions and approved by the Secretary-General.

2. The Board established that, in order to be able to examine the work of the secretariat on the projects approved, the new projects received, the grants disbursed or pending, the narrative, financial and audit reports received, and to make recommendations to the Secretary-General on grants to be disbursed, it should meet on the basis of eight working days.

3. The Board recommended that it should meet in principle in April of each year, starting in April 1991. Part of its session should be scheduled to coincide with part of the session of the Committee against Torture in order to be able to organize a meeting with the Chairperson and members as well as with the Special Rapporteur on Torture.

4. By the first of April of each year, the Board should be provided with the exact figures of the available funds, grants recommended, grants disbursed and pledges made.

5. As in the past, the focus of the Board is on supporting programmes providing direct medical, psychological, social or other assistance to torture victims and their family members. The Board insisted that the maximum amount of money available to the Fund should be spent for assistance to victims of torture and their families.

6. The Board also made recommendations for support of training programmes for health professionals of different countries on the techniques of treatment of victims of torture, in which they could compare their experience.

### I. APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS

7. Applications for the holding and assistance to seminars and conferences should be made well in advance in order for the Board to consider them at its annual April session, and, as the case may be, attach conditions to a grant. A follow-up activity, such as publication of the proceedings and documents of such meetings, is a standard condition.

8. At its tenth session, the Board discussed the possibility of setting a general maximum for funding such projects. A proposal for a maximum amount of US$ 30,000 was made.

9. The secretariat should prepare, for reference purposes, a list of all meetings financed by the Fund, indicating the regions where they took place, the type of conference and the outcome of such assistance for the treatment of victims of torture.

10. As a rule, the Board does not recommend to set up a new organization with the money of the Fund.

11. As a rule, no project should depend on the Fund for more than a third of a project's budget.

12. The Board does not consider projects received immediately before or during its annual session.

13. If the same organization presents similar projects, these projects should preferably be merged, for instance, with the first one submitted to the Fund.

14. The secretariat should ask the organization or person receiving the grant(s) to give precise information on their bank account.

15. Application forms for presenting a project to the Fund should be inserted in the revised fact sheets on torture to be published and widely disseminated.

## II. REPORTING ON THE USE OF GRANTS

16. The secretariat should request organizations to indicate the total amount of their budget or provisional budget, the use of the grant(s) received from the Fund and the amount of money they request from the Fund, both in local currency and in United States dollars (indicating the date of the exchange rate). In the charts prepared for the Board at its annual session, the secretariat could indicate the annual rate applicable at the United Nations during the month of receipt.

17. The secretariat should ask organizations to indicate the number of patients who are treated free of charge or who are paying and what percentage they are paying.

18. Every organization should try to provide medical certificates or other appropriate interview forms of victims of torture, without mentioning their names and provided that it does not endanger the victims of torture and their families, in order to assess that a person has been tortured. If the number of victims of torture treated by an organization is important, it would be appreciated to receive a chart detailing the kind of torture suffered, the kind of medical, psychological and other treatment given, etc. The secretariat, upon request, could provide organizations interested with examples of such certificates, forms and charts.

19. On certain projects which may raise questions, information could be requested from field officers and representatives of agencies such as UNDP, WHO, etc. If they agree to visit an organization and submit an evaluation on the project(s), the secretariat should inform in advance the organization concerned that such a visit may take place. As the need may be, the Board may recommend to the secretariat to inform the local representatives of United Nations agencies about grants to projects in their area, so that they are informed of the Fund's relationship with the organizations in charge of these projects. The person in charge of such projects should be informed of this by the secretariat.

20. New organizations should be requested to indicate, in their description forms, reference organization(s) or person(s) supporting their project(s); the secretariat should prepare a list of organizations and persons internationally recognized in the field of treatment of victims of torture, which may be consulted by the Board and the secretariat.

21. Members of the Board, the above-mentioned internationally recognized persons (upon request by the Board) or the secretariat of the Fund could visit, in their geographical region, projects raising questions, may be one per year, and meet with members of the staff of the organization implementing the project, in order to better understand and evaluate the work performed and envisaged. The secretariat should inform in advance the organization concerned that such a visit may take place. A short but detailed report on this visit should be prepared and circulated to the members of the Board.

22. The secretariat should draft a form to help organizations to present their financial report on the use of the grants given by the Fund.

23. All organizations sponsoring projects and receiving support by the Fund should be requested to look for other financial sources, since the Board feels that they should not become totally dependent on the Fund (see also paras. 10 and 11). They should be informed not to expect automatic renewal of their grants, but that they may submit applications for new grants every year. Such applications should be received by the secretariat by 31 December of each year in order to be considered by the Board at its meeting in April of the following year.

24. All organizations having received grants should be reminded to submit auditors' reports on their use. The secretariat should insist on receiving accounting reports, but only on an ad hoc basis insist on receiving audit reports.

25. If no satisfactory narrative, accountings and audit reports or acknowledgement receipts are received from a person in charge of a project over a certain period of time without any explanation as to the reasons why, the person shall be informed by the secretariat that the money should be refunded.

26. The secretariat should, when possible, reorganize the files and lists in order to gather projects presented by the same organization in only one file. However, organizations will be requested to continue to provide detailed information on each project and sub-project.

## III. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANS INVOLVED IN ACTIVITIES CONCERNING TORTURE

27. As a follow-up to a suggestion made by Mr. Peter Kooijmans, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture, description forms for presenting a new project to the Fund should be given to Rapporteurs and staff members going on mission, in order to allow organizations concerned to receive directly such forms.

28. The secretariat of the Fund, in cooperation with the secretariat of the Special Rapporteur on Torture, of the Committee against Torture, of the Human Rights Committee and of other relevant organs and with the assistance of the Chairman of the Board and the Chairman of the Committee against Torture, should prepare for the Board a basic text for reference on the definition of victims of torture, direct or indirect. The following questions should be studied in this respect: should the definition of victims of torture be narrowed or broadened; what kinds of psychological torture exist; what is the relationship between torture and corporal punishment, on the one hand, and enforced or involuntary disappearances, death penalty and the conditions under which this sentence can be executed, as well as difficult conditions of detention and gross violations of human rights, on the other hand.

29. Cooperation was also requested by the Board and accepted by the Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Chairman of the Committee against Torture concerning access to non-confidential information available in the secretariat files of these organs, in order to assess better the situation in certain countries and the work of certain organizations.

30. After discussions with the Special Rapporteur on Torture, the Chairman of the Committee against Torture and representatives of organizations conducting projects, the Board felt that it was very important, for the purpose of obtaining positive effects in the psychological treatment of direct and indirect victims of torture, that States be informed of the importance of prosecution of torturers for rehabilitation of such victims.

## IV. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

31. During intersessional periods, the Chairman may authorize emergency grants up to US$ 10,000 per request. For requests over US$ 10,000 (up to no more than US$ 50,000), he shall seek, through the services of the secretariat, the advice of at least two other members of the Board. An amount of US$ 100,000 has been recommended for that purpose.

32. In the consideration of requests for emergency cases, it should be kept in mind that assistance should go preferably "through established channels of assistance", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 36/151.

33. Concerning the emergency cases, if any of the cases examined by the Board would need urgent action between sessions, the Chairman could take action in conjuction with the secretariat.

34. In case of receipt by the secretariat of new emergency cases, the secretariat should indicate the nearest specialized organization, in particular if this organization is financed by the Fund.

35. Once a case is no longer an emergency one, it should be taken out of the list.

## V. INFORMATION ON THE FUND

36. In view of the relatively critical financial situation of the Fund, more publicity about torture and its sequelae is needed to arouse the interest of the general public and its generosity. Moreover, a separate brochure on the Fund is recommended to be used for those interested in applying and contributing to the Fund.

APPENDIX III

Statement by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture at the Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture's Volunteer Recognition Night

Toronto, 8 November 1991

Thank you for inviting me to your Volunteer Recognition Night, because this is an event where I feel at home: volunteer among volunteers, worker against torture among workers against torture, human rights activist among human rights activists.

The combat by the United Nations against the pernicious evil of torture already has a long history. It began by outlawing torture in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966 and it has never ended. Everybody knows that torture is such a widespread phenomenon that there is every reason to continue the battle.

In the early 1970s, the General Assembly of the United Nations developed a comprehensive programme for the elimination of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment and the further elaboration of international norms in the decades that were to follow. This programme resulted in the course of the past years in a set of moral, political and legal obligations to be adhered to by States, organizations and individuals. In 1975, a Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment was adopted by the United Nations and was used as the basis for a convention which was concluded in 1984. The essence of the Convention against Torture is that States are under an obligation to take legislative and adminstrative measures to prevent acts of torture and to declare such acts offences under its criminal law.

People who violate such laws shall be prosecuted and, if found guilty, punished. An international committee is set up under the Convention to monitor the implementation of these laws. Today over 50 States Members of the United Nations are parties to that Convention, out of a total of 165 members. This is still far too few in the light of reports by an organization such as Amnesty International according to which torture is still actively practised in more than 100 countries.

In addition to the adoption of this Convention the United Nations has also appointed a Special Rapporteur to examine questions relevant to torture, to seek and receive credible and reliable information on such questions and to respond to such information without delay. The Special Rapporteur tries to establish contacts with Governments on the basis of information that he receives about the practice of torture, which may lead him in certain cases to

take urgent action with regard to Governments which are under suspicion of committing or condoning torture. Such urgent action may take the form of a telegram or a visit to the country concerned, either confidentially or in the open, by way of mobilizing public opinion. So much for the international measures to prevent the occurrence of torture, measures which are rather well put on paper in good legal form, but which in many cases lack sufficient implementation - as you all know only too well.

One of the means to mitigate the effects of torture on the victims and their families is to give them financial, medical, psychological and social aid. It is widely recognized that victims of crimes - and that is what torture is - need more attention and rehabilitation than the perpetrators. It was with this in mind that the General Assembly established in 1978 the Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture in Chile; the Fund's mandate was enlarged in 1981 to cover victims of torture anywhere in the world. Humanitarian, legal and financial aid must be directed through established channels of assistance to the victims and/or their families.

The Fund is administered by the Secretary-General and his staff, assisted by a Board of Trustees composed of a Chairman and four members who have wide experience in the field of human rights, serve in their personal capacity and come each from one of the five regions recognized within the United Nations. The Board is currently composed of experts from Costa Rica, Jordan, Kenya, the Netherlands and Yugoslavia. They meet once a year to study requests for aid submitted in the course of the year and offer their advice and recommendations to the Secretary-General.

The Fund obtains the bulk of its money from States Members of the United Nations, which are under no obligation ("Voluntary Fund") to contribute. Fortunately, a yearly increasing number of Governments decide to contribute to the Fund, more and more so on a regular basis and in similar amounts, which makes it possible for the Board of Trustees to plan ahead and to commit itself in the long run. Contributions have also been received from private individuals and non-governmental organizations. In the Netherlands, a special bank account was opened under the auspices of the Dutch branch of the International Commission of Jurists.

Since its creation, the Fund has collaborated with over 50 organizations which altogether submitted some 100 projects and sub-projects for implementation in 40 countries. These projects fall essentially into the following fields: psychotherapy, medical care, social rehabilitation and training of professionals (doctors, psychologists, psychotherapists, paramedical personnel, social workers, etc.) and scientific research for the specialized treatment of torture victims. Besides the torture victims themselves, the Fund has been able to help the relatives of victims who also suffer psychologically, economically and socially. Furthermore, it has assisted with the development and application of suitable treatment for torture victims.

The Fund supports a variety of projects. Some of them are rather big clinics or centres for counselling, socio-psychological workshops, such as those in Copenhagen, London, Paris and Toronto, where hundreds of new survivors are registered every year; on the basis of yearly requests for assistance, each one receives contributions from the Fund in the range of several tens of thousands of United States dollars. A new medical project was started in Berlin where large numbers of survivors are expected in the future due to the developments in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The great majority of the projects are relatively small in size, although no less important on that account, many of them in countries where torture was until fairly recently government policy, such as Argentina, Chile, Uruguay or countries where torture is still practised either with or without the consent of the Government. Such projects are sometimes carried out under most difficult circumstances, in far away places, and with too many patients for small staffs often consisting of volunteers. Correspondence with these projects is seldom without difficulties.

In the course of the years, the Board of Trustees and the United Nations staff have developed methods of assessing the bona fides of new projects, of evaluating budgets submitted, of setting conditions in terms of quality of aid, bookkeeping and reporting. Indeed, the Board exercises the utmost care in studying the financial reports and the reports on activities, before advising the Secretary-General to release grants to projects. As a matter of fact, in a very small number of cases, regular contributions have been suspended because of unsatisfactory methods of reporting or no reporting at all.

In order to give an impression of the scale of the activities of the Fund, the following figures should suffice. Since it began its operations in 1983, well over 200 grants, totalling over US$ 6 million, have been authorized for projects. For the year 1991, over 70 new grants were made corresponding to some 60 projects representing an amount of some US$ 2 million. Every year, States Members of the United Nations have to decide on their voluntary contribution to the Fund; fortunately there is a fairly constant flow of resources into the Fund. However, it is clear that there will never be enough money to help all the victims of torture in the world. Some people with enormous traumas, both physical and mental, need professional help for many years. What we know from the project leaders who are heard by the Board is that with United Nations funding a sizeable number of people can be helped to start a new life, to make that life tolerable and to come to peace with the society they live in. Such statements are encouraging but do not diminish in the least the need to eliminate torture at the root.

In order to give you an impression of some of the projects the Fund is dealing with, I will take you through a couple of examples.

The League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Geneva, Switzerland, has submitted for funding a handbook for help to refugees and asylum seekers, a training manual for people dealing with survivors. The Fund has gladly contributed to the publication which will be of interest to you all, although it might not contain in every respect new material for the Toronto staff. However, it struck me as rather practical in its approach and I quote from the text of a chapter on "Stress in refugees and asylum seekers":

> "Perhaps the most difficult subject to talk about is sexual assault. This type of torture is a common occurrence amongst women, although men are not excluded. To humiliate women and men in their sexuality is to attack the person's innermost being. For many women and men, sexual life becomes a shameful memory. Women do not dare to go to a gynaecologist, being afraid of being touched. They may not see a doctor for years and as most torturers are men, to see a male gynaecologist is out of the question.
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> "A South American refugee woman in Sweden, tortured in body and mind, had not dared to see a gynaecologist for over 10 years following her sexual torture. She did however suffer from internal pain and her doctor referred her to a woman gynaecologist who was prepared to listen to the woman's terrible story. When she got to the consulting room, however, the refugee just could not speak, although she knew Swedish well. The specialist encouraged her: 'Tell me in Spanish'. The woman began to talk, and went on for a long time. When her words ebbed away, the doctor said kindly 'Now, could you tell me in Swedish, I'm afraid I don't understand Spanish'. The gynaecologist had understood that the woman first had to formulate the whole story in her mother tongue. This led to an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding which allowed the refugee woman to recount the story once again in Swedish and thus exteriorize and communicate her traumatic experience."

One of the biggest projects is the support of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture in London which is managed by Ms. Helen Bamber and Dr. Rodriguez. The Foundation does not receive funds from the British Government and has to find its own finances wherever it can. Many of the Foundation's clients are indirect victims. That is to say that they mostly have been forced to watch torture of members of their families and friends. In five years, the Foundation cared for between 2,500 and 3,000 victims. The clients come from all over the world, from over 40 countries with names which must be very familiar to you all. Ms. Helen Bamber's work at this centre consists in substantiating claims of asylum seekers and supervising voluntary staff, psychiatrists, doctors, interpreters, etc. The centre offers family and couple therapy where one partner has been sexually tortured.

Talking about families who survive torture, I should mention a project undertaken and sponsored by the Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims in Copenhagen, which investigates the after-effects of a family member's imprisonment and torture upon the interpersonal patterns in the family with special reference to the impact of the psychological development of children.

Since 1989, RCT has participated in an international project called "Children in Crisis" which aims at coordinating multinational, multicultural research efforts concerning the effects on children. Such research is needed to more effectively prevent the violation of human rights of children and to be better prepared to offset the consequences for the individual child.

Another centre that concentrates on victims of torture and family members is the Centre for Victims of Torture, Minneapolis, United States. The Centre for Victims of Torture is a non-profit-making organization that treats survivors of politically motivated torture and their family members; it is the first treatment centre of its kind in the country. The Centre's staff of six full-time and seven part-time employees is made up of an interdisciplinary team that includes a psychiatrist, a physician, a psychologist and a social worker.

Eight thousand torture victims live in Minnesota. Clients come from all over the world: 50 per cent from Africa; 15 per cent from South-East Asia; 15 per cent from Latin America; 15 per cent from the Middle East and Eastern Europe; with the remaining 5 per cent being United States citizens who were tortured abroad. Care is currently provided free on an outpatient basis only for about 32 people per month. Treatment is tailored to meet individual needs: it can include medical treatment, psychotherapy and help in gaining economic and legal stability.

The Centre for Victims of Torture is dedicated to providing direct treatment for survivors of government-sponsored torture. This includes researching effective rehabilitation methods, providing professional training to other care providers and contributing to the prevention of torture through public education and cooperation with other human rights organizations.

Over the years, it has become clear that to treat patients who are victims of torture requires a special skill and involves a variety of disciplines. It is therefore of special importance that those who are experienced in this field are willing to transmit their knowledge and skills to others. For that purpose, regular training courses, academic conferences and workshops are being organized in all parts of the world and subsidized by the Fund. Only last month, a regional Asian Conference on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims was held in Islamabad, Pakistan. In that country, it has been possible to set up an organization of medical professionals, called Voice Against Torture (VAT), which has established a centre for the rehabilitation of torture victims that functions well and has seen more than 700 patients during the first year of its existence.

Finally I should like to refer to the need for scientific research into the reasons why people engage in torture, why they use their human creativity for the destruction of other human beings. This research is necessary in order to be in a better position to treat victims of torture well. The Fund has already been approached by one or two institutions to subsidize such research. This sort of activity is of lesser priority in the overall framework of providing aid to victims of torture, but its importance in the

long run should not be underestimated. I am pleased to say that Dr. Allodi of your Centre has shown considerable interest in both fields.

In conclusion, let me make it very clear that none of these projects could have been realized without the commitment and sacrifice of hundreds and thousands of volunteers willing to give their time, energy and money to help fellow men and women who have been humiliated, physically and psychologically harmed and who may have lost most if not all faith in mankind. Money cannot buy trust, money cannot heal wounds, money canot make people forget the unspeakable and the unforgettable, but survivors who are lucky enough to find help in your Centre or other centres - I say lucky because there are 10 unattended survivors for every one that is treated in one of the centres - do feel the extra warmth, care and devotion that volunteers add to the professional treatment they undergo. The Board of Trustees, composed of five volunteers in Geneva, realizes that it is able to do its work - spreading the small amount of funds available over the large number of projects - only because of the work which volunteers like you perform all over the world. It is the result of this work which enables me to be here tonight.

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